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President praises tsunami relief effort

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — As the initial team of Mississippi Baptist disaster relief workers headed to tsunami-stricken southeast Asia, President Bush praised the work religious organizations have done in the post-tsunami relief effort, telling a Feb. 3 National Prayer Breakfast audience that millions of victims have been helped by their assistance.

The Mississippi Baptist team currently in the tsunami area cannot be identified by names or destinations, due to security concerns and tightening regulations on foreign aid workers by governments in the tsunami area. Mississippi Baptist disaster relief officials have said that the pace of teams being dispatched to the tsunami area will pick up now that long-term recovery efforts are being put into place.

"[T]he American response is so much more than what our government agencies did," Bush said, speaking the morning after his State of the Union address. "Look at the list of organizations bringing relief to the people from Indonesia to Sri Lanka. They're full of religious names: Samaritan's Purse, American Jewish World Service, Baptist World Aid, the Catholic Medical Mission Board. They do a superb job delivering relief across the borders and continents and cultures."

"Today, millions of people across this earth get the help they need only because our faith-based institutions live the commandment to 'love thy neighbor as thyself.' Often, that means remembering the people forgotten or overlooked in a busy world: those in Africa suffering from HIV/AIDS, young girls caught up in the global sex trade, victims of religious persecution."

As of February 7, Mississippi Baptists had donated \$181,146 to the tsunami relief effort in southeast Asia through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's tsunami relief fund. As of February 7, Southern Baptists and others had con-



GETTING AROUND — Bicycles and other small-wheeled vehicles are at a premium in Banda Aceh, the capital of Indonesia's tsunami-devastated Aceh province where debris continues to block both major transportation routes and less-traveled trails into villages in desperate need of relief supplies. A team of Mississippi Baptist disaster relief volunteers is currently in southeast Asia to assist in the relief effort. (BP photo)

tributed more than \$8,069,813 to help tsunami survivors through International Mission Board in Richmond, Virginia.

Tax deductible donations are now being accepted for the MBCB fund. Checks should be made payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board with "tsunami relief" noted on the memo line, and mailed to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, ATTN: Tsunami Relief, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

People who are donating to tsunami relief have been cautioned by charity experts to be sure they are donating to

organizations that will utilize the money for the intended purpose; fully 100% of the funds donated to the MBCB special tsunami relief fund will be used in the Mississippi Baptist/Southern Baptist response to the tsunami disaster.

Mississippi Baptists who would like to volunteer to assist tsunami relief survivors through the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit should contact the MBCB Men's Ministry Department at the above address. Telephone: (601) 292-3334. E-mail: cwright@mbcb.org. Specialized training and immunizations may be required.

Miss. CP on rise

Gifts to the work of the Lord through the Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) in January showed an increase when compared both to giving last month and for the same period in 2004, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board which disburses the funds. The January total of \$3,210,450 is 23.12% higher than the \$2,607,587 given last month, and .69% higher than the \$3,188,310 given in the same period in 2004. Total Mississippi CP giving for the current fiscal year, which runs from January-December, stands at \$3,210,450, which is .69% above last year's giving during the same period and 23.03% ahead of current year budget needs. The 2005 Mississippi CP budget of \$31,314,491, was approved by messengers to the 2004 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. A total of \$2,609,541 is needed each month to meet the convention board's budget for 2005. In addition to helping support more than 10,700 missionaries in the U.S. and around the world through affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention, Mississippi CP also helps fund such programs as the Hispanic Pastors' Retreat on February 11-12 at Lake Tiak O'Khata near Louisville; Vacation Bible School Jumpstart on February 15 at Liberty Church, Flowood; and the Christian Performing Arts Festival on February 25-26 at Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

SBC CP up for month

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program receipts in January of \$20,342,956.62 were 42.44% more than the \$14,281,731 received the previous month and 1.2% above the \$20,102,270 received in January 2004, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program are up nearly 1.9 % compared to the same time frame in 2004. As of Jan. 31, the year-to-date total of \$66,614,942 for Cooperative Program (CP) Missions is \$1,242,962 ahead of the \$65,371,980 received at the same point in 2004. Designated giving of \$37,579,334 for the same year-to-date period is 4.45%, or \$1,750,379 below gifts of \$39,329,713 received at this point last year. The \$27,202,877 in designated gifts received last month is \$221,489 above the \$26,981,388 received in January 2004, an increase of 0.82%. For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$66,614,942 is 109.08% of the \$61,067,231 budgeted, or \$5,547,711 above budget to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. At the close of their last fiscal year, Oct. 1, 2003 to Sept. 30, 2004, Southern Baptists recorded a 3.64% increase in CP giving, for a record total of \$189,865,255.

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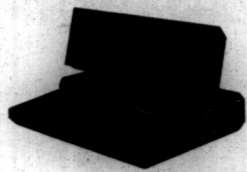
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State of the Family, 2005

It's a familiar dilemma for contemporary moms and dads waiting in the school car pool line to pick up their child and his/her friends for a special time of after-school play together.

Now, Tommy, does your mother or father have custody of you this week? Which one should I call if there is an emergency while you're with us? Oh, I see. Your father has custody through today but you're staying with his mother because he's out of town and your mother is going to pick you up at your grandmother's house later tonight. Well, should I call your father, grandmother, or mother?

You're not sure? Maybe your father's girlfriend since your father is out of town and your grandmother doesn't have a car and your mother isn't going to pick you up until later? Poor child; you're as confused as I am.

It may be a familiar dilemma, but it's also a sad depiction of family life in America — and Mississippi. Too many of our children are suitcase sons and daughters, shuffled from one house to another without being able to put down roots and develop the security of knowing they actually belong somewhere.

A young family recently moved into a well-established and highly-recommended neighborhood in a small Mississippi city, and soon discovered they were the only intact, traditional family on their street. All the adults living on the street had been divorced at least once. Some were living together without benefit of marriage and attempting in vain to blend their two sets of children. There were single mothers struggling to raise children fathered by several men to whom they had not been married and who were now absent. Some of the households were suffering from alcohol and other drug abuse, unfaithfulness, and abandonment.

When they went to the school to fill out the admission paperwork for their children, they had to answer such questions on

the forms as, "Are there any valid court orders involving your children that the school should know about?" and respond to such inquiries as, "Please list relatives and other people who are not allowed to pick up your children from school for any reason, and state why they are not allowed to do so."

The fact is the young couple did move into a good neighborhood with an excellent school, but they also moved into a typical American neighborhood of mangled marriages, mismanaged lifestyles, and mixed-up children.

Truly, when Satan picked the most important link in the chain of civilization and set about to weaken that link in an effort to destroy the whole chain, he couldn't have selected a more critical link than the nuclear family. Most troubling of all is that statistics seem to bear out that Christian families are in as much trouble as non-Christian families.

The divorce rate among Christians is virtually the same as any other group. The incidence of alcohol and other drug abuse in Christian families, plain for anyone to see, is far too high. Gambling, pornography, and other vices are also indulged by too many Christians in their daily lives.

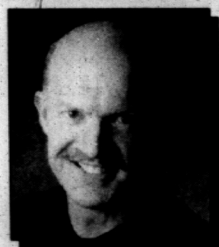
If Christians are not set aside to be different from the world — to be living examples of godly conduct to a lost world — then what good are we to God? Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?"



GUEST OPINION:

How they twist our words

By Bill Maier, vice-president
Focus on the Family
Colorado Springs, Co.



curriculum and its accompanying teachers' guide will employ SpongeBob and his pals to encourage young children to accept homosexual behavior under the guise of promoting "tolerance."

The We Are Family foundation claims there is no mention of homosexuality in their materials, but a quick check of their website found numerous references to "sexual orientation" and "sexual identity." There was also a "teachers guide" that included:

- Suggestions on how to persuade school librarians to highlight books that are "representative of all sexual orientations."
- Methods to initiate classroom discussion of "homophobia" and "compulsory heterosexuality."
- Instructions on teaching students to construct a

Pyramid of Hate, a diagram illustrating "acts of genocide" that have been committed against individuals due to (among other things) their sexual orientation.

• A section on "appreciating diversity" that encourages kids to consider what might interest them in "other sexual orientations."

Curiously, a few days after Dobson's speech was mentioned in The New York Times, the We Are Family Foundation's website was "sanitized" of most references to sexual orientation, and existing links to the nation's major homosexual groups were eliminated.

Some progressive pundits may ask if there is any reason why public schools shouldn't teach kids to accept (or even embrace) homosexuality. Here are four — according to research

It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men." (Matthew 5:13 NIV) As the Word of God repeatedly points out in stark detail, we may think we can sow the wind with impunity but we will ultimately reap the consequences of the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7).

God is merciful, but He is also just. How much longer will He stay our well-deserved judgment for destroying the American family? Let us begin now pleading for forgiveness and living righteously, before we all find out.

conducted at Harvard Medical School and cited in the journal Pediatrics, kids who experiment with homosexual behavior are more likely to engage in marijuana and cocaine use before the age of 13; sexual intercourse before the age of 13; sexual intercourse with four or more partners; and sexual contact against one's will.

Big Media's criticism of Dobson shows once again that they just don't get it — America's parents don't want SpongeBob, Big Bird and Elmo co-opted in an effort to persuade their kids that homosexuality is "normal and natural."

Dobson sounded the alarm and now the liberal press is taking him to task. By distorting the facts they are attempting to marginalize him and undermine his influence. Clear-thinking Americans won't buy it — they've trusted Dobson's advice for 27 years and will see through the media's SpongeBob charade.

Maier is a child and family psychologist. He is co-author of *Marriage on Trial: The Case Against Same-Sex Marriage and Parenting* (InterVarsity Press, 2004), available online at www.lifewaystores.com. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

N.Y. state judge strikes traditional marriage

NEW YORK (BP) — A New York state judge ruled Feb. 4 that same-sex marriage must be legalized there, making New York the third state nationwide where such a ruling has been issued in recent months. The ruling likely will be appealed.

New York Justice Doris Ling-Cohan ruled on behalf of five homosexual couples who had sought a marriage license in New York City but were denied and subsequently sued New York City's clerk. They are represented in part by the homosexual legal group Lambda Legal.

Ling-Cohan ruled that the state's current marriage laws violated the due process and equal protection clauses of the New York constitution. "[T]he institution of marriage has evolved over time," she wrote in her 62-page decision. "...The exclusion of plaintiffs from entering into civil marriage indisputably discriminates against them on the basis of sexual orientation."

Ling-Cohan sits on the state Supreme Court, which is at the trial-court level in New York's legal system. The Court of Appeals is the highest court. New York is the third state in the past 16 months where a court has ruled for same-sex marriage. In November 2003, Massachusetts' highest court legalized gay marriage. The ruling took effect last May. Last year, two judges in Washington state issued similar rulings. Both cases are now before Washington state's highest court, which will hear the case in March.

Homosexual and liberal activists had filed several lawsuits in New York State, believing that they eventually would be victorious in at least one of them. In the past few months, at least two judges had upheld the state's marriage laws.



Pro-family leaders criticized Ling-Cohan's ruling. "To preserve marriage we have to win 100% of the time," Mathew Staver, president of the pro-family legal group Liberty Counsel, told Baptist Press. "To destroy the institution, we only need one loss, and that's another reason why we need constitutional amendments on the state and federal level."

Liberty Counsel filed a friend-of-the-court brief, defending the state law. The organization represented three state legislators, the New York Family Policy Council, and Conservative Party Chairman Mike Long.

Figuring prominently in Ling-Cohan's decision was the Massachusetts case that legalized same-sex marriage (*Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*) and the U.S. Supreme court decision overturning anti-sodomy laws (*Lawrence v. Texas*). She cited *Goodridge* at least ten times and *Lawrence* at least eleven. Conservatives have warned that the two cases would lead to a domino effect.

Ling-Cohan said the five same-sex couples have suffered under a "caste-determined status" of marriage laws. She wrote fondly of the five couples, calling them "committed and loving relationships."

"Permitting plaintiffs to marry would confer innumerable tangible and intangible benefits for them and their children while causing harm to no one," Ling-Cohan wrote. "Defendant has articulated no legitimate State purpose that is rationally served by a bar to same-sex marriage, let alone a compelling State interest in such a bar."

Staver criticized the decision's reasoning. "I'm astounded by the decision because the court invents the 'fundamental right to choose one's spouse,'" he said. "It also states that there's no legitimate [state] interest or purpose in the marriage laws. And she finds on her own that same-sex 'marriage' will not cause anyone harm. Those are astounding conclusions by a single judge."

Ling-Cohan compared the current bans on same-sex marriage to former bans on interracial marriage. In fact, the first five pages of her ruling recounted the history of the interracial bans, which were struck down for good in the U.S. Supreme Court's 1967 *Loving v. Virginia* case.

"It was only less than 40 years ago that the United States Supreme Court held that anti-miscegenation statutes, adopted to prevent marriages between persons solely on the basis of racial classification, vio-

late the Constitution because they infringed on the freedom to marry a person of one's choice," she wrote. "Similarly, this Court must so hold in the context of same-sex marriages."

Staver said the comparisons between interracial marriage and same-sex "marriage" are appalling. "I think the comparison to interracial marriage is totally inappropriate because race is an immutable characteristic and sexual preference is not," he said. "Plus, the interracial marriage rulings still left intact the essence of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Same-sex marriage obliterates the institution."

She stayed her decision 30 days to allow the defense to appeal, but she noted what changes need to be made within

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Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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DNFFYVL FLVIFR-FLJ:

FYXHFR-FLJ

Clue: A = G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Malachi Two: Nine.

Canada debates marriage

OTTOWA, QUEBEC (BP) — The move to legalize same-sex marriage in Canada officially began Feb. 1, when the governing Liberal Party introduced legislation that would redefine marriage coast-to-coast. Although the bill is favored to pass, there are no guarantees. It needs 154 votes in the House of Commons, with a Globe and Mail newspaper survey showing it already has 139 supporters. Another 118 MPs (members of Parliament) say they'll vote against it, while 49 are undecided or refused to reply to the survey. The Liberals want to see it passed by the end of June, when Parliament breaks for the summer. Although same-sex marriage already is legal in seven provinces and one territory — thanks to a series of court rulings — the bill would legalize it in the remainder of the country, including Alberta, where the bill is unpopular. "Canada is a land built on a tradition of tolerance and respect, rooted in a Charter that protects the equality rights of all Canadians," Liberal Justice Minister Irwin Cotler said in a statement. "Extending civil marriage to same-sex couples does not take away the rights of any others, nor does it relate to religious marriage." The new definition of marriage would ignore references to sex and would read, "Marriage, for civil purposes, is the lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others." The legislation is known as Bill C-38. Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper, who opposes the bill, had hoped to add amendments that would protect the traditional of marriage while legalizing civil unions — a compromise of sorts. That strategy appears to be in jeopardy. "The bill is written in a way that will make it difficult to amend," Harper said in a statement after closely studying the bill.

Looking back

10 years ago

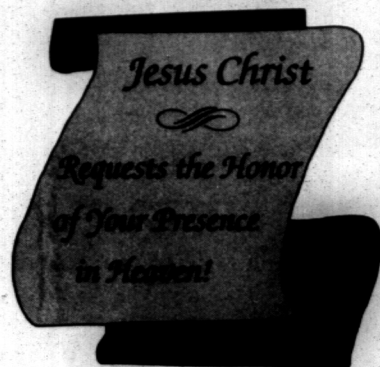
Millions of children frolic each day with a certain purple dinosaur, thanks in part to Southwestern Seminary student Dan Merrell. Merrell is full-time director of marketing for the home video division of the Lyons Group, producer of Barney the Dinosaur.

20 years ago

Members of Wellman Church, Brookhaven, welcome home pastor Steve Smith, believed to be the state's first Southern Baptist pastor to complete a marathon race. He finished the Mississippi Marathon in Jackson in three hours and 12 minutes.

50 years ago

David R. Grant, pastor of Drew Church, receives a 1955 Ford Fairlane V-8 Town Sedan as a gift from the church. The church also provides an expense account for the operation of the pastor's automobile.



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

A VIOLENT WORLD

A U.S. Senate hearing was held the second week in September 2003, to hear about the impact of violence worldwide. The numbers are staggering! When you and I hear of someone who has been killed, murdered, or destroyed because of anger and violent outbursts, we are really only pulled into the thought process if we know the person. Maybe we stop and think about it if it is a celebrity. We certainly are in anguish if it is a friend, but consider this: annually, one and a half million people die because of violent outbursts!

Now, think about it in these terms. Between the ages of 15-44, the number one cause of death in the worldwide population is violence. It is heart-breaking and incredibly painful when you realize that there seems to be no answer for the dilemma. While I'm grateful that a Senate hearing raised awareness, I'm fairly sure that few answers have come for solving the problem.

One thing is for sure — the problem did not just begin last year, the year before, with 9-11, Vietnam, World War II, or the activities of terrorists that we have watched over the years. When you stop and think about it, it appears that the problem began right around the Garden of Eden when one-fourth of the people alive at the time died because of a violent act. Following their worship time, a man named Cain went out and killed his brother Abel. Cain



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

arrived at worship out of sorts with God and uncaring about his brother and the world around him. Later, when he thought that he could get by with it, his anger spilled over into an act of violence and death. He destroyed his brother Abel.

While this might not be any source of comfort, it is a source of reality that what we are dealing with today did not begin yesterday. What appears to be something that began with our early ancestors and looks as though it happened near the Garden, actually began in the heart. Even today, while violence may appear to be engendered in a certain segment of the culture or to be seen more frequently in some fully educated or poverty-stricken society, it is now as it was then an issue of the heart.

You may recall that Jesus clearly and strongly addressed this problem in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:21, He said, "You have heard that it has been said by them of old times that thou shalt not kill and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." Yet, in verse 22, Jesus brought a new, deeper, more challenging and

far-reaching understanding of violence and hate in our hearts when He said, "But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Racca!' shall be in danger of the counsel, and whosoever shall say 'Thou fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire."

The way Jesus thought about violence brings us to understand that our attitudes toward each other and the words we say can be destructive. It makes you wonder, in addition to the one and a half million people killed by violence every year, how many others are destroyed. I wonder how many people have their character assassinated at church. I wonder how many well-intended acts of kindness are broken by misguided and bitter interpretations.

Sadly, everywhere you turn you see rage. There is road rage, check-out counter rage, marriage rage, sports events rage, I don't like the songs we sing at church rage, I didn't get my way rage, I don't like it that you got your way rage, the people that work around me don't like

me rage, I don't like the people I have to work with rage, my parents are terrible people rage, and anger, hostility, and violence rage. I suppose that the United States Senate, with all its influence and power, cannot make any decisions that would make a difference in our world of violence. I certainly could not, but you know what? God can! In fact, God alone is the one who can make a difference in our violent hearts.

Though I do not speak Chinese, I have read that in Chinese the word "crisis" is made up of two characters — one meaning "danger" and the other meaning "opportunity." In the crisis of our anger, there is the great opportunity for God to exercise His power to keep us under control, to cause us to act in love rather than react in hate, and to enable us to make a difference that will help rather than impact people in a way that will hurt.

Over a thousand times I have thought about the wisdom given to me years ago by an old pastor. He said, "Jim, there are going to be a lot of times when you want to spit, but you better swallow!" While you and I may not be able to stop all of the violence in the world, maybe today as we walk with God we can find Him there at every moment of emotional need saying, "Swallow, my child, for I am with you."

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.

Magazine notes Baptists on 'influential' list

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Joining Billy and Franklin Graham on Time magazine's list of the 25 "Most Influential Evangelicals in America" were Southern Baptists Rick Warren, Richard Land, Chuck Colson, and Tim & Beverly LaHaye. "American Evangelicalism seems to defy unity, let alone hierarchy," Time said in its February 7 issue. "Yet its members share basic commitments. Time's list focuses on those whose influence is on the rise or who have carved out a singular role."

Time dubbed Warren "America's New People's Pastor," noting that his book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, has sold more than 20 million copies over the past two years and is the best-selling hardback in United States history. The magazine said when Warren — pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif. — took the podium to pray on the closing night of Billy Graham's crusade at the Rose Bowl in November, the 82,000 people cheered as if he had scored the winning touchdown.

"Although Franklin Graham is heir to the throne of the Billy Graham organization, many believe that Warren, 51, is the successor to the elder Graham for the role of America's minister," Time said.

Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, filled the slot of "God's Lobbyist" on Time's list. The magazine focused on Land's connections to the White House and his influential role in shaping the Bush administration's social policies.

"The men around his longtime friend George W. Bush don't sit around waiting for Land's call," Time said. "They reach out to him, individually and as part of a weekly teleconference with other Christian conservatives, to plot strategy on such issues as gay marriage and abortion."

Colson, once imprisoned for his role in the Watergate scandal as an aide to President Richard Nixon, made Time's list as "Reborn and Rehabilitated." The founder of Prison Fellowship was commended by Time for helping to define compassionate conservatism and provide a model for faith-based initiatives. Today he is active in politics, advising Karl Rove on Sudan policy and lobbying against same-sex marriage, Time said.

As "The Christian Power Couple," Tim and Beverly LaHaye share a spot on Time's list. Tim LaHaye helped found Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, but it's his coauthoring of the "Left Behind" series that will leave a lasting mark, Time said. The series has sold more than 42 million copies and served to set the image people have about how the world will end.

Beverly LaHaye founded Concerned Women for America, one of the most influential pro-life, pro-traditional marriage organizations in Washington.

Evangelists Billy and Franklin Graham also share a spot among the 25 most influential evangelicals as "Father and Son in the Spirit." Time said while the father has had the ear of presidents for five decades, he has largely kept his distance from politics and devoted his life to saving souls. The son, on the other hand, is more eager to step into the political spotlight and give his opinion on issues such as homosexuality or the Iraq war, Time noted.

"Dr. Graham, having [ministered] to many Presidents, is more private about his counsel than Franklin, who speaks more to average Americans than their leaders," Rod Parsley, pastor of World Harvest Church in Columbus, Ohio, told Time.

Others on Time's list of the 25 Most Influential Evangelicals were James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family; Rick Santorum, the Senate's third-ranking Republican and a Catholic leader in pro-life and pro-family social causes; Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law & Justice; Richard John Neuhaus, a Catholic priest who counsels President Bush on religious matters; Mark Noll, a scholar who contends that a high view of the Bible and high-level participation in American intellectual life can coexist; J.I. Packer, an Oxford-trained theologian, executive editor of Christianity Today and author of the cross-denominationally celebrated "Knowing God"; David Barton, vice chair of the Texas Republican Party and a loud voice in the church-state separation debate; Doug Coe, director of the Fellowship Foundation which hosts the National Prayer Breakfast.



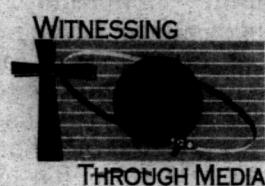
What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

February 10, 2005

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.



MAY 6 - 7, 2005

PARK PLACE BAPTIST CHURCH, PEARL

WTM WORKSHOPS

- **"Nuts and Bolts" of Camera Operation** – Led by Don Warren and David Bunker
Participants will walk through the basic camera operations such as framing, functions and camera directions.
- **Getting Started on the Web** – Led by J.C. Howell
Internet beginners can see what you need to know about getting on line and publishing a church Web page.
- **How Did They Do That?**
(1 hour session for everyone) Examples will be shown. Share your samples ... bring on VHS format.
- **Creative Production** – Led by Don Warren and David Bunker
Creating spots, outreach videos, devotional thoughts, VBS promotion, budget presentations and others for the local church.
- **Sound Advice Basic** – Led by Trooper Hales
Participants will receive audio tips and production techniques for the sound operator (house and broadcast).
- **Sound Advice Advanced** – Led by Trooper Hales
This question and answer format workshop will go a step further in helping both broadcast and house audio operators with practical help.
- **Advanced Web Site Design** – Led by J.C. Howell
Participants who have a basic knowledge of Web site design and want to take your church Web page to the next level.
- **Non-Linear Editing for Weekly Church Broadcast** – Led by Lynn Bullock
If you are still using traditional tape based editing to edit your weekly worship service, this session will demonstrate an efficient solution for using today's low cost non-linear systems to simplify the process.
- **Projection Systems Forum** – Led by Ian Richardson
If you are interested in, familiar with, just bought or looking for ways to use your video projection system, this question and answer format workshop is for you.

Reservation Deadline is April 15, 2005 • Full refunds prior to April 15, 2005. No refund after that date. FOR MORE INFORMATION or REGISTRATION, contact Judy Chen, Communication Services, 601-292-3378 or 1-800-748-1651

STATE SINGLE ADULT RETREAT

May 28-30 • Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

MEN'S CONFERENCE

- Led by Randy Impson, pastor, Calvary BC, Starkville, & former singles minister

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

- "Discovering God's Will" led by Gwen Williams (Miss Chocolate), New Orleans

OTHER CONFERENCES:

- Picking Up The Pieces • A Servant Heart
- Truth Through Humor

(more conferences will be announced at a later date)

EVENTS

- Seafood Banquet
- Afternoons free with options for a trip to New Orleans to do missions or for other fun trips

STATE SINGLE/SINGLE-AGAIN CONFERENCE

June 17-18 • Temple BC, Hattiesburg

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DIANNE SWAIN

Fresh Spirit Ministries, North Little Rock, Ark.
author of "My Divorce Hurts Worse At Church"

CONFERENCES:

- Divorce • Never Married • Widows • Single Parenting

Cost: \$10, includes lunch

(Registration deadline is June 13 for meeting/meal.)

If not preregistered, you may pay \$5 at door but will not include meal. For more information call Phillip at 601-544-1794.

For more info, contact Glenn Shows: Phone, 601-292-3373 or 1-800-748-1651 or E-mail, gshows@mbcb.org.

SENIOR ADULT SPRING RALLIES

- **TUESDAY, MARCH 8**
FBC, Long Beach
Speaker: Frank Gunn
Contact Betty – 228-864-2584

- **THURSDAY, MARCH 10**
Fairview BC, Columbus
Speaker: Charles Gentry
Contact Tommy – 662-328-2924

- **TUESDAY, MARCH 15**
FBC, Columbia
Speaker: Frank Pollard
Contact Archie – 601-736-2254

- **MONDAY, MARCH 28**
West Jackson Street BC, Tupelo
Contact Jim – 662-256-8778

For more info, contact Glenn Shows: Phone, 601-292-3373 or 1-800-748-1651 or E-mail, gshows@mbcb.org.

- **TUESDAY, APRIL 5**
Briarwood, Meridian
Speaker: Henry Lyons, Alabama
Contact Buddy – 601-681-8668

- **TUESDAY, APRIL 12**
Emmanuel BC, Grenada
Contact Barry – 662-226-5316

- **THURSDAY, APRIL 14**
FBC, McComb
Contact Talmadge – 601-833-8111
Speaker: Tommy King, William Carey

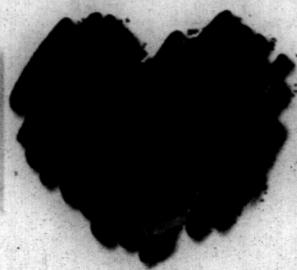


**THE CHRISTIAN
PERFORMING ARTS
FESTIVAL** offers some-
thing for the entire
church family:
conferences to help your
church staff be more
creative in the worship
services; to better equip
youth ministers/leaders
for youth ministry and
mission opportunities; to
examine great old and
new approaches to
recreation; and to
explore ways to use
media, puppetry,

clowning and drama.

These conferences are planned for both adults and
students, and our hope is that you will consider being a
part of this weekend in 2005.

If you have any questions
about the festival,
please contact
Rene Edwards at
1-800-748-1651 or E-mail her at
redwards@mbcb.org.



March 31-April 2, 2005
**CHURCH LIBRARY
MINISTRY RETREAT**
Camp Garaywa, Clinton

Conferences and Leaders

FOCUSED DRIVEN LIBRARY - Led by Marty Woodall

BUILDING THE COLLECTION - Led by Marty Woodall

PROMOTION CONCEPTS - Led by Marty Woodall

BASIC SEARS AND DEWEY - Led by Eva Nell Hunter

GETT'N AND KEEP'N STAFF - Led by Eva Nell Hunter

STORYTELLING - Led by Eva Nell Hunter

HANDMADE GREETING CARDS - Led by Susan Robinson

PHOTOGRAPHY - Led by Tim Nicholas



Each morning on the screened in
porch at Patterson Place, beloved
award-winning novelist
TERRI BLACKSTOCK will be leading
our porch devotionals at 7:30 a.m.

WORSHIP LEADER - Tom Prather

FOR MORE INFORMATION or REGISTRATION, contact Judy Chen,
Communication Services, 601-292-3378 or 1-800-748-1651

Thursday, March 31

2:00 p.m. Registration opens
5:00 Supper, Dining Room
6:00 Conference 1
7:15 Worship
8:45 Ice Cream Fellowship

Friday, April 1

7:30 a.m. Porch Devotional
8:00 Breakfast, Dining Room
9:00 Conference 1 conclusion
10:30 Break
10:45 Conference 2
12:15 p.m. Lunch, Dining Room
1:00 Free Time
5:00 Supper, Dining Room
6:00 Conference 2 conclusion

Saturday, April 2

7:30 a.m. Porch Devotional
8:00 Breakfast, Dining Room
9:00 Conference 3
10:15 Break
10:30 Conference 3 conclusion
Noon Conclude

IN HIS PRESENCE

First Annual Hispanic Women's Retreat Primer Retiro Anual de Mujeres Hispanas

"In Your presence is fullness of joy..." Psalm 16:11
"En tu presencia hay plenitud de gozo..." Salmo 16:11

March 18-19, 2005
18-19 de Marzo de 2005
Central Hills Baptist Retreat
Kosciusko, Miss.

Bible study, testimonies, music, prayer, fellowship
Estudio Bíblico, testimonios, alabanzas, grupos de
oración, compañerismo

Cost: \$15 per person
Costo: \$15 por persona

Child Care Provided
Habrá cuidado de niños

Registration begins at 2:00 p.m. Friday, March 18.

Registración empieza a las 2:00 p.m. el Viernes 18 de Marzo

Deadline to register March 13 Último plazo para registrarse 13 de Marzo

REGISTRATION FORM

FORMULARIO DE REGISTRACIÓN

Contact Person: _____ **Phone:** _____

Persona Encargada: _____ **Teléfono:** _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____

Dirección: _____ **Ciudad:** _____

State: _____ **Zip:** _____ **E-mail:** _____

Estado: _____ **Código:** _____ **Correo electrónico:** _____

On a separate sheet: Names of women attending with you: _____
En un papel aparte: Nombres de las mujeres que asisten con usted: _____

Names and ages of children attending: _____

Nombres y edades de los niños que asisten: _____

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Para más información
comuníquese con:
Mrs. Damaris Medina
Hna. Damaris Medina
601-267-5393
jmedina@netdoor.com

MAIL TO: ENVÍE A:
Central Hills Baptist Retreat
P.O. Box 698, Kosciusko, MS 39090-0698

Please make checks payable to:
Por favor haga los cheques a favor de:
Central Hills Baptist Retreat

Deadline to register March 13
Último plazo para registrarse 13 de Marzo

Hispanics

STATE MINISTRY ASSISTANTS CONFERENCE

April 4-5, 2005

Devoted to You

JAY SCRIBNER has been pastor of FBC, Branson, Mo., for 28 years. He has led over 100 revivals and participated in foreign mission trips as well as been involved in the Missouri Baptist Convention. He likes to emphasize aggressive mission development and debt-free stewardship. He is familiar to ministry assistants and spoke at the 2003 National Leadership Conference for the National Association for Southern Baptist Secretaries. Scribner and his wife, Kay, have been married for 28 years and have two sons and two grandchildren.

Praise Time will be led by **STEVE AND BECKY CARVER** of One Way Ministries, Mathiston, Miss. Steve and Becky founded this non-profit organization in 1994 based on John 14:6, the scripture in which Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." They lead praise and worship and/or provide special music for concerts, retreats, revivals, crusades or wherever there is a need to share the gospel message through the medium of music. Steve and Becky are both graduates of Mississippi State University but have been in full-time music evangelism since June 1988. They are going wherever God leads. They have been as far west as Phoenix, Ariz.; as far south as Stuart, Fla.; and as far north as Flint, Mich. They are also instructors at the annual Christian Music Conference at Murray State University in Murray, Ky.

Preregistration with the fee in advance is necessary in order to make room assignments and prepare adequately for meals and materials. Complete the preregistration form you will soon receive in the mail (must be received in our office no later than March 14. **NO REFUNDS OF MEAL COSTS AFTER THAT DATE!**) Contact Kay McDonnell for more information: 601-292-3266, 1-800-746-1651 or E-mail kmc-donnell@mbch.org.

McLaurin Heights Baptist Church Pearl, March 4-5, 2005

Festival Choral Director Rick Greene

FRIDAY, MARCH 4

6:30 p.m. PARADE OF CHOIRS, ENSEMBLES,
DRAMA TEAMS

8:30 p.m. CREATIVE MINISTRY TRACKS



- Drama
 - Praise Bands
 - Vocal Solo Coaching
 - Interpretive Movement
 - Music/Creative Ministry
- Directors Workshop

9:15 p.m. PRAISE BAND PLAY-OFF

9:45 p.m. DISMISS

SATURDAY, MARCH 5

9:00 a.m. COMBINED CHOIRS REHEARSAL

10:15 a.m. CHOIR BREAK

10:45 a.m. CHOIR REHEARSAL

11:30 a.m. PRESENTATION OF FESTIVAL MUSIC

12:00 p.m. AWARD CERTIFICATES AND DISMISS

Susan Clark Luttrell

For more info, contact the Church Music Dept.
601-292-3267 or 1-800-746-1651 or E-mail sluttrell@mbch.org

MAC 2005

FRIDAY

6-7:15 p.m.
7:30-9:30

Registration
Opening Celebration

SATURDAY

9-9:30 a.m.
9:45-10:30
10:45-11:30
11:30-12:15 p.m.
1-4
7:30-9:30

Morning Celebration
Take One (Breakouts)
Take Two (Breakouts)
Lunch
Ministry Projects
Evening Celebration

SUNDAY

9-9:45 a.m.
10-noon

Take Three (Breakouts)
Closing Celebration

March 4-6

FEATURING

PROGRAM GUESTS

CINGER SMITH

NAMB, Houston, Texas

BURT & SUZANNE

SMITH

NAMB, West Africa

CHESED DENT

MAK, Pacific Rim

MUSIC & DRAMA

ADOPTED

MC Praise Team

JOSHUA SQUAD

Mime Troupe

Bethany College

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Ministry projects in the
West Jackson area.

Cost: \$25 per person

Registration Deadline

Friday, Feb. 18

For info: Call Robin Keads

601-292-3262

1-800-746-1651

Pray this day for...

February 11-24, 2005

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

"To be little with God in prayer is to be little for God in service. Much secret prayer means much public power."

THE KNEELING CHRISTIAN by an Unknown Christian

For: (1) Race Reconciliation (CAC Emphasis); (2) The Mexican Central Region Baptist Convention includes all of Mexico City and some churches in Toluca and Hidalgo. They have a goal of starting 500 new house churches by Nov. 2005. Pray that national churches will be willing to plant house churches all over Northwest Mexico City.

For: (1) Focus on Missions Through WMU Organizations, 14th - 20th; (2) Pray for the Sri Lankans living in Milan, Italy, with whom God has recently opened several doors of relationships. Most are Buddhists. Pray that this people group would be open to receive Christ while they are far from home.

For: (1) VBS JumpStart, Liberty BC, Flowood, 9 a.m. - noon (SS); (2) "About 90 children and teens, as well as a few adults, are attending the Chronological Bible Storying in Village 5 twice a month," writes the Buryat Team of Russia. Pray that the Lord would begin a church in this village.

Bill George, Brentwood, Tenn., works as a strategist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention. There are 420,000 African-Americans living in the Memphis area. Pray that God will encourage individuals to partner with churches and church planters to reach the harvest.

For: (1) MBREA Convention, FBC, Gulfport 17th - 18th (CG); (2) Mississippi Baptist Church Music Conference, FBC, Ocean Springs, 17th - 18th (CG); (3) There is an opportunity to print and distribute Scripture portions among the Silti of Ethiopia. Pray for wisdom about which Scripture portions should be reproduced since very little has been translated at this point.

For: (1) Hispanic Pastors' Retreat, Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville, 11th - 12th (CPD); (2) Scott and Linda Davis work with the Elkhart Community Baptist Church plant in multi-housing venues in Cassopolis, Mich. The current location is not working out. Pray for a new location.

For: (1) Christian Education Clinic, Highland BC, Meridian (D&FM); (2) Thank God with the International Baptist Church in Brasilia for the way IMB personnel have helped lead them in reaching out to the English-speaking community there and for those from other countries who have come to know Christ while in Brazil.

For: (1) North Mississippi Pastor & Wife Retreat, Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain, 6 p.m., 18th - 2 p.m., 19th (W/LD); (2) State BSU Retreat, Camp Caraywa, Clinton, 6 p.m., 18th - 2 p.m., 19th (CLGM); (3) Please pray today for Prime Minister John Winston Howard of Australia. Pray for two ladies among the

Asian Indians of East Africa. One is a believer and one is not. Their husbands verbally and physically abuse them and their sons. Pray that these men will be consumed by the overwhelming sense of God's love for them and will desire to show the same love to their family instead of abuse.

Cly Carrigan, Wake Forrest, N.C., is a national missionary for interfaith evangelism. Pray for him and his family as he travels and teaches others to share the gospel with people who are devoted to religions and cults that cannot take them to heaven.

Hokkien Harvest-Taiwan Team members Mike and Carolyn Miller report that a 20-year-old new believer in Taiwan, J., was critically injured in a motorcycle accident. He is the only believer in his family, and his parents are looking to the church for strength and direction. Please pray for J's healing and the salvation of his family.

Please pray for a seeker Bible study being held in a factory in Xiamen, China. The owner of the factory is a Christian and wants to reach out to his employees. Two believing employees lead the study to teach non-Christians the gospel. Pray that many workers and their families will be reached through this group.

In Indonesia, a negative attitude towards Christians continues to grow. Newly elected President Yudhoyono has promised to review some of the concerns of the church. Please pray for him, as he is being pressured by Islamic clerics to move toward Shariah Law (strict Islamic law). Intercede for him to make his decisions not under the influence of men, but under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

John and Rhonda Gaskin minister to students at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan. Pray that God will move in a mighty way among American Indians. Pray for the ministry to equip students to go back to reservations and start churches.



FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCES

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28
FAIRVIEW BC, COLUMBUS**

7-9 p.m. • 662-328-2924

Conferences

- Steps to a Godly Home
- Children/Preschooler Leaders and Parents
 - Caregiving
- Servant Heart as a Single Adult

**THURSDAY, MARCH 1
WALTHALL BC (NEAR EUPORA)**

7-9 p.m. • 662-258-3259

Conferences

- Developing Communication Skills
 - How to Handle Finances
- How the Bible Defines the Role of the Spouse

*For more info, contact Glenn Shows
Phone, 601-292-3373 or*

1-800-748-1651 or E-mail, gshows@mbcb.org.

Encourage a MK with a birthday card!

4-3-89

MISS ALICIA L. RACEY

Parents: Michael & Annette
General Evangelism: Western South America

4-4-83

MISS JENNIFER L. JOHNSTON

Parents: Vincent & Sharon
Church Planting: Eastern South America

4-23-98

MISS LILLY A. FOSTER

Parents: Michael & Miranda
Strategy: Middle America

4-24-90

MISS KIMBLERY E. CARLTON

Parents: David & Pamela
Strategy: Southern Africa

4-28-87

MISS REBEKAH L. RAY

Parents: Michael & Linda
Strategy: Central & Eastern Europe

4-29-93

MR. CHRISTOPHER D. CARLTON

Parents: David & Pamela
Strategy: Southern Africa

PLEASE NOTE

Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to Stewardship.

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to:

Child's name and parent's name

MBCB Stewardship Dept., PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205

HOUSE TOPS

JUST FOR THE RECORD

First Church, Grenada, will host Braided, Not Divided, a marriage and family enrichment conference Feb. 11, 7-9 p.m., and Feb. 12, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.. The conference will be led by David and Rhea Briscoe, Elmbrook Church, Brookfield, Wis. Cost is \$10/person. Contact the church office at (662) 226-3661 for information, or visit www.fbc-grenada.org.

First Church, Vardaman, ordained Joe Smith to the ministry. He is available for supply and other preaching opportunities. Contact Smith at (662) 682-9527 or through the church at (662) 682-7458.

Branch Church, Morton, held a baby dedication on January 23. Shown are Brian, Courtney and Avery Ann Gordon with Michael Giles.

Griffith Memorial Church, Jackson, held a community-wide Mom's Day of Prayer Jan. 15. Sixty-five ladies representing 10 different churches attended. The ladies prayed for the children of the community, state, nation, and world.

First Church, Mathiston, placed a display of crosses made by the Brotherhood on their front lawn Jan. 8-24. Each cross represented 2000 abortions.

Jewel Pigg, WMU director, **Ludlow Church, Ludlow**, is shown with her representation of Lottie Moon. The church gave \$2,036 to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Mt. Olive Church, Amite County, honored Kathryn Lewis Martin on November 7, 2004, with a tea fellowship and plaque of appreciation. Lewis has been actively involved in missions work for over sixty four years and served as WMU director.

First Church, Vicksburg, will host the Annie Moses Band Feb. 18, 7 p.m. There is no charge. For information, contact Jim Hess at (601) 636-2493.

The RA's of **First Church, Calhoun City**, held a basketball shoot-out to raise money for

the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, raising \$2000 in pledges and donations. Participating boys are pictured.

New Hope, Foxworth, recognized the following that had perfect attendance in Sunday school for the 2003-2004 church year. Shown are Chase Clark, B.B. Stringer, Nancy Thomas, Sherrell Magee, Betty Pittman, Lynn McKenzie, and Jimmy Thomas.

New Hope Church, Foxworth, exceeded their Lottie Moon Christmas offering of \$4,000.00 by \$363.65.

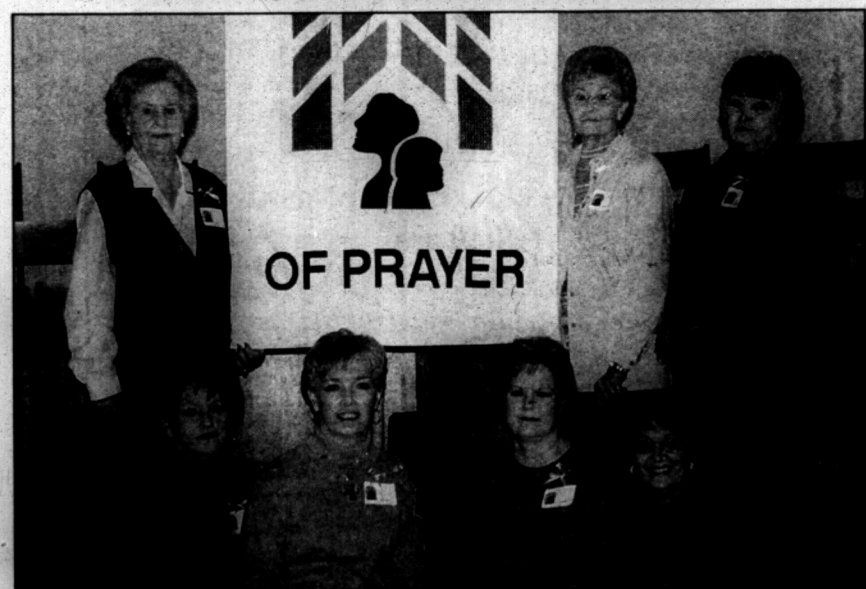
Walker Hill Church, Brandon, is seeking resumes for a full-time youth/music director or a part-time youth director and a part-time music director, as well as a pianist. Mail resumes to Walker Hill Baptist Church, 1100 Wade Patrick Rd., Brandon, MS 39042.



Ordination, First Church, Vardaman



Baby Dedication, Branch Church, Morton



Angel Wings Women's Ministry, Griffith Memorial Church

REVIVALS

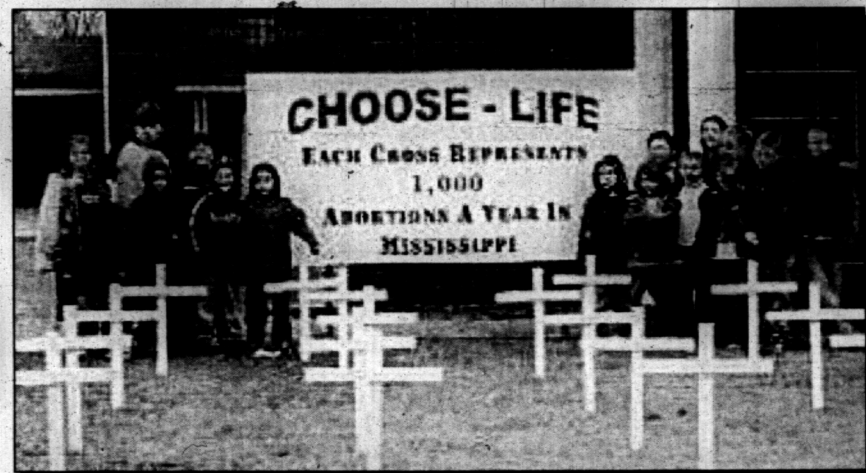
Jericho Church, Guntown: Revival, Feb. 13-16; Sunday, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 6:30 p.m.; Harvey Reeves, evangelist; Marvin Robbins, pastor.



Jewel Pigg, Ludlow Church



Kathryn Lewis



Display of Crosses, First Church, Mathiston



RA's, First Church, Calhoun City



Perfect Attendance, New Hope Church, Foxworth

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College News

Blue Mountain College will be hosting Sensational Senior Day for high school seniors Feb. 18, 8:15 a.m., in Paschal Student Center. Contact BMC's Office of Admissions at (800) 235-0136 or visit www.bmc.edu for more information. Registration deadline is Feb. 16.

Blue Mountain College and Union University, Jackson, Tenn., have entered into an arrangement to offer a dual degree nursing program that allows students to earn a Bachelor of Science in either Biology/Chemistry, Natural Science, Psychology, or Social Science at BMC and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Union. For more information, contact BMC's Office of Admissions at (800) 235-0136.

Brad Stephens, Columbia, was awarded the Carpenter-Grady Scholarship by the Board of Ministerial Education of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Shown are Daniel Caldwell,



Caldwell & Stephens

dean of the Cooper School of Missions and Biblical Studies at William Carey College, and Stephens.

Mississippi College hosted the 31st annual Math and Science Tournament Feb. 3-4. This is the largest academic competition for high schools in the state, attracting 1400 students from 132 private and public schools in Mississippi. Students scoring in the top 20% on the written tests are offered scholarships ranging from \$300 to \$2000 per year for four years.



Mississippi College

A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

*Seeking to be a university
recognized for academic
excellence and commitment
to the cause of Christ*



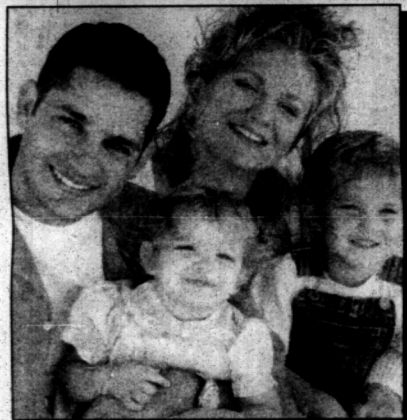
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www.mc.edu

STAFF CHANGES



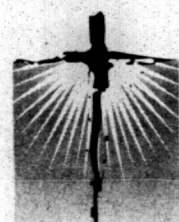
Trey Sullins and Family

First Church, Jackson, has called Trey Sullins as children's minister. He has been serving as children's pastor at South Biscayne Church, North Pointe, Fla. He and wife Kristi have two children.

Westwood Church, Meridian, has called Corey Fontan to become minister of youth and children.

Hebron Church, Soso, has called Laura Jo Wedgeworth as minister of youth. Wedgeworth previously served at First Church, Marion.

Bethlehem Church, Winona, has called David Rogers as pastor. Rogers and his wife Carla and daughter Kristen were formerly members of Ethel Church where Rogers was part-time youth minister.



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ORGAN CONCERT



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18 AT 7:00 P.M.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH • JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

No Tickets Required

Guest Artist Ken Cowan

Westminster Choir College & St. Bartholomew's Church, New York City



431 North State Street • Jackson, Mississippi
Information: Andy Swanner, Associate Minister of Music/Organist
601 949 1922 • aswanner@fbcj.org • www.fbcj.org
Sponsored by First Baptist Church Jackson
& the Jackson Chapter of the American Guild of Organists



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E-mail: info@olford.org

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

How Much Does Sin Cost?

Hosea 4:1-9; 5:13-15

By Frances C. Graham

You have been called into a large room painted white with wood trim and bright lights. People sit on each side of the aisle. You pass through a gated rail and now stand in front of a high seat from which the judge sits in a modern day court room. You hear someone on your left stating your crime for the judge and you solemnly await your sentencing because you have no recourse. The main thought you have is: "Why did I not do what I knew was right?"

Now go back in time to about 750 B.C. Picture a prophet of God standing at the city gate where civic activities are conducted. The prophet is Hosea from the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He is speaking to an audience of prophets and priests, rulers and others from that same country as well as some

from Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

Hosea is charged by God to give His indictments of His people, the Israelites. For you see, Israel had entered into a covenant relationship with God. They had received land in the Northern Kingdom as a covenant gift from God but they had not fulfilled their part of the covenant by being faithful to Him.

This court is called to address the sins of Israel. In this case, the offended party, God, is also the prosecutor and judge. Hosea's role is to encourage the people to turn from their sins against God and instead to live their lives in submission to Him.

The people are told they are untrustworthy, fail to show compassion toward others and lack a true and abiding knowledge of God. (4:1) The first two charges



Graham

describe how God expects His people to relate to each other and to Him. They also describe how God will relate to His people.

The third charge, lack of knowledge of God, encompasses more than just knowing facts. It is instead that the people have not developed an intimate and personal relationship with God that includes following God's Word in their daily activities. If one truly develops this relationship with God, they ultimately come to be faithful and loving toward God and one another.

The people's sins are identified as swearing, lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery, all violating the Ten Commandments as set forth in the relationship to be developed with God and His people. (Exodus 20:7, 13, 14, 15, 16) Violence is rampant and murder such a common place that the blood of the victims runs together. (v. 2)

With sin, judgment follows. Verse 3 indicates the land suf-

fered. drought and the cattle, birds and even the fish in the streams died.

Now the people in the court immediately want to find someone else to blame for their sins. Hosea, continuing under God's directions, notes they should not attempt such because accusing others only increases problems and will not decrease their own responsibility for sinning. (v. 4)

Hosea then addresses the priests and the prophets who instead of teaching the truth became stumbling blocks for the people and commit sins both day and night. (v. 5) They actually feed on the sins of the people and enjoy their transgressions by taking bribes and relishing the sin offerings.

They are the ones who should have taught the knowledge of God and helped the people develop that lasting and loving relationship with the Lord.

Since the priest and prophets have ignored Him, He would ignore their sons. (v.6) God also notes that He will turn their "glory" into "something disgraceful." Therefore, the priests

and the people will suffer the same punishment. (v.8, 9)

Looking ahead, one finds the people remained unwilling to turn to God for healing. (5:13) Instead, they wanted help from Assyria. God doesn't work like that for He is stronger than any foreign power. He passed judgment on the people and then withdrew to await the people's repentance and to allow them to search for His presence in their lives. (5:15)

The question remains. "Why do we not always do what we know is right?" Look at your relationship with the Lord. Sure, you might go to church on Sunday and Wednesday. You might read your Bible every day and say a prayer. That is not a relationship with our Lord and Savior. Bible study and prayer simply prepare us for the rest of the moments in our days which all belong to Him. If we would keep Him with us all day long, we would discover obedience becoming a reflex reaction.

Graham is a member of Adaton Church, Starkville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Jesus' Ministry Continues

Luke 22:14-22; 41-44; 66-71

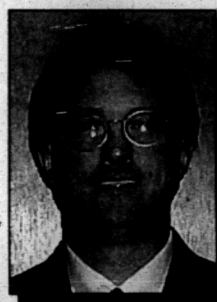
By Neil Gant

Some things happen that we can never forget. We never forget because we plan activities that prompt us to remember. We celebrate Christmas — because we never want to forget that God invaded human history with the greatest gift of all. We celebrate Easter — because we never want to forget that Jesus rose from the grave victorious over death. He arose and confirmed the security of our redemption in Him. The Hebrew people celebrated the Passover because they never wanted to forget the great victory won for them by Jehovah in the Exodus from Egypt. He never wanted them to forget so He instituted the Passover celebration as a reminder. We now have come to the place where Jesus celebrated the last Passover meal

with His disciples. It marks a new beginning and a new celebration. It marks the change between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The Lord's Supper is the visual reminder of the finished work of Jesus. Jesus instituted this Supper on the night before His death. He transitioned the disciples from the old symbol to the new symbol.

MINISTRY FOR OTHERS, LUKE 22:14-20

The great desire of Jesus was to share the Passover with His disciples one more time before He went to the cross. The Passover involved suffering and Christ is our Passover. This meal pointed to the suffering of the Lamb of God. Jesus wanted to have this time to prepare for the



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events that were about to unfold. He needed this time with His disciples away from the crowds of people. The Lord so loved His disciples that He wanted to share this most significant event with them alone. The Passover meal pointed both backward and forward. It pointed back-

ward to the deliverance of the children of Israel from the bondage they suffered in the land of Egypt. It was their turning point as a nation. They celebrated the Passover the remember. The meal also pointed forward. It pointed to the day when the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world would come. He would deliver His people not from bondage to Egypt, but from the bondage of sin. He would come and set His people free from their enslavement to the flesh. He would come and deliver them from the bondage of Satan. At the conclusion of the Passover, the Lord Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. He estab-

lished an ordinance so that we could celebrate what He did on our behalf. When we celebrate the Supper, we are celebrating the very essence of our faith — the atoning death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The next time we come to the table, let us do so with a heart tested by the Word and the Spirit.

MINISTRY IN GOD'S WILL, LUKE 22:21-22; 41-44

Jesus told His disciples that the very one who would betray Him was with them in the Upper Room. The Son of Man was to go as it had been determined for Him. The cross was no surprise for the Lord Jesus. His very purpose in coming to earth was to bring salvation to His people. Isaiah predicted that He would suffer cruelly to bring life to His people (ch. 53). The angel told Joseph that He would save His people from their sins. It was determined in the counsel room of the Triune God in eternity past.

Jesus walked away, about a stone's throw — within earshot of the disciples. His prayer was

partly for their benefit. The cup about which He prayed refers to the cup of divine wrath. The terrible horrors of the cross lay ahead of Him. He was in extreme agony in the garden. He prayed not my will but your will be done. The best commentary on what Jesus experienced in Gethsemane is the inspired statement of Heb. 5:7, "He offered up prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears..."

MINISTRY WITHOUT END, LUKE 22:66-71

The Lord Jesus is now on trial. What a cruel injustice is directed to Him. He is accused of doing good. In His response to the questions of the accusers, He reveals to them His true nature. He is the Son of God. He will reign forever at the right hand of God. The Lord's ministry on the earth was wonderful to behold. His ministry continues forever for His people. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Gant is pastor of Pleasant Grove Church, Gore Springs.

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Articles should be concise, to the point, and contain only pertinent information.



Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, where, when details of the story, and a contact person's name.

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